

## Recruitment and Retention of Personnel Serving Young Children with Disabilities: **Compensation, Loan Forgiveness, and other Financial Incentives**



For more, visit <https://ectacenter.org/topics/personnel/recruitment.asp>

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### **Compensation for early intervention and early childhood special education (EI/ECSE) staff is an ongoing issue that impacts attraction and retention.**



For these staff, low compensation and low societal valuation impact the number of individuals who enter the profession. Compensation is the largest perceived gap between early childhood special educators' and college students' preferred career paths. Its significance is even higher for college students of color. The gap between the amount of student debt for students of color and eventual earnings in special education is a significant factor in their career choice.

Examples of strategies states are using to address these challenges are grouped into three categories: compensation, loan forgiveness, and other financial incentives. Financial support may also extend to programs or schools, which can further benefit educators. Some strategies support Pre-K–12 personnel, while others focus on birth–age 5 educators.

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### **Compensation** is a pressing need to attract and retain educators.



Colorado's Department of Early Childhood committed to a 2023 distribution of \$4 million through retention bonuses to over 1300 direct service providers and service coordinators.



Illinois' [Early Intervention Provider 10% Rate Increase](#) for contracted personnel in all 16 core EI services.



Washington DC's [Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund](#) qualified eligible early childhood educators to receive up to four payments of up to \$3,500 each between October 2022 and September 2023.

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**Loan forgiveness** includes tuition assistance and loan forgiveness programs to attract prospective teachers into high-need subject areas, including ECSE.<sup>1</sup>



The [North Carolina Teaching Fellows](#) program covers areas of most need such as special education, STEM fields, and low-performing schools. Students enroll at one of eight select educator preparation programs and receive up to \$5000 per semester in financial aid.



Wisconsin's [Minority Teacher Loan Program](#) is for teacher candidates enrolled in a Wisconsin college or university preparation program. It prepares them to become certified in areas where there is a shortage of teachers, like special education.

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**Other financial incentives** include mortgage guarantees or other housing support, down payment assistance in exchange for service commitment agreements, decreased employee tuition in fee-for-service funded placements in public school prekindergarten programs and wrap-around care, and opportunities to continue teaching, mentoring, and coaching after retirement.<sup>2</sup>



Connecticut's [Teachers Mortgage Assistance Program](#) helps teachers of color who graduated from a historic Black college or a Hispanic-serving institution buy homes through down payment assistance and interest rate reduction.



Montana [Teacher Housing](#) provides teachers who live in the Big Sky School District affordable housing.

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Project Officer: Julia Martin Eile



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<sup>1</sup> Acosta, K.A., & Holdheide, L.R. (2021). *An opportunity to invest in the educator workforce. Center on Great Teachers and Leaders.* <https://cedar.education.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/An-Opportunity-to-Invest-in-the-Educator-Workforce.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Sutchter, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016). *A Coming Crisis in Teaching? Teacher Supply, Demand, and Shortages in the U.S.* Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/247.242>